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Success Story - AEON World Festa U.S.A.

2009

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Report Highlights:

This report outlines the critical role that the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) in Japan played in the success of AEON World Festa U.S.A. from May 29 to 31, 2009. The three-day event was a great success, resulting in the sales of U.S. agricultural products amounting to well over \$3 million.

Includes PSD Changes: No
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Executive Summary

The ATO assisted AEON, the largest supermarket chain in Japan, and its subsidiary, MYCAL in organizing AEON World Festa U.S.A. throughout Japan at the end of May, 2009. This U.S. fair was carried out from May 29 to 31 at 250 AEON's Jusco stores and 93 MYCAL outlets, with an extension to June 7th at the five flagship Jusco stores. Following the AEON's successful California Fairs in 2007 and 2008, ATO persuaded executives from the supermarket chain to expand their promotion to become an American event, carrying a variety of American foods.

Accordingly, this year AEON developed the AEON World Festa U.S.A. that featured a wide variety of U.S. products ranging from cherries, beef, pork, citrus, salmon and roes, chicken, broccoli, carrots, snacks, ice cream, cheese, canned processed foods, frozen vegetables, soft drinks, mineral water, wine, beer, and whisky. Fliers of the event, which carried a photo of California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger promoting California products, were inserted in newspapers and distributed to households throughout Japan. While products from California, such as cherries and oranges, were among the main items of the AEON promotion, other U.S. foods such as beef, pork and salmon along with new items such as cheese and ice cream created a lot of interest from customers.

In addition, there was entertainment during the opening of AEON World Festa U.S.A. at the supermarket's five main stores that featured hula dancers, jazz bands and cooking demonstrations to draw customers to the promotion. The ATO played an important role in carrying out the cooking demonstrations by drafting a plan for AEON to showcase the ATO's V5 Healthy Eating Campaign that educates Japanese consumers about the high quality of American food by featuring healthy, tasty and fun recipes. As the first World Festa U.S.A. was a great success, AEON is planning on organizing a second American promotion next year and is willing to expand this promotion to further showcase the diversity of U.S. foods.

Background

Over the last two years, AEON has held a California food promotion with the assistance of ATO Osaka. The ATO took the initiative to obtain the permission from the State of California to carry the image of the California Governor on AEON's fliers and contributed considerably to the success of the events. With the success of the California Fairs in the past, the ATO succeeded in convincing AEON to expand the promotion to become an American Fair, with more variety of food products from all over the United States.

Sales Result of AEON World Festa U.S.A.

Sales from this three-day promotion were over \$3 million. A number of U.S. trade associations participated in the event. The table below shows the trade associations that participated in the event, states of origin and sales amount for each product category.

Products	Trade Associations	States of Origin	Sales amount (US\$)*
Meat (Beef/Pork/Chicken & other products)	U.S. Meat Export Federation Poultry & Egg Export Council, U.S.A., U.S	Nebraska / Indiana / Missouri / Oklahoma / Iowa / Arkansas	1,155,323
Fruits (Cherry/ Grapefruits/ Orange)	California Cherry Advisory Board, Florida Department of Citrus, Sunkist	Florida/California	1,072,020
Vegetables (Broccoli/ Carrot)	Western Growers Assoc.	California	167,444
Salmon & Roe	Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute	Alaska	79,178
Frozen Vegetables	N/A	N/A	48,100
Prepared Meals	N/A	N/A	240,550
Dry Glossary (snacks, Mexican foods, Peanut Butter, Soup, Spam etc.)	N/A	N/A	130,931
Beverage (Wine/ Liquor/ Soft Drinks)	Wine Institute	California	156,159
Dairy Products (Ice Cream/ Cheese)	Dairy Export Council	Pennsylvania/ Wisconsin	17,428
Walnuts / Raisin Bread	Raisin Administrative Committee	California	N/A
Total			3,067,133

* Note: Exchange rate \$=95yen
Sales amount includes sales from AEON and MYCAL



Key Roles played by ATO

The ATO played vital roles in the success of the AEON World Festa U.S.A. by developing a good relationship with AEON as well as U.S. trade associations and providing the retailer with a great deal of assistance.

1) Relationship Building with AEON

The ATO cultivated a close relationship with AEON over the years by helping the company to organize California Fairs in 2007 and 2008 as well as a U.S. meat promotion in 2008.

Confident in the assistance provided by the ATO in the past, AEON decided to expand the scale of the fair and developed it into an American promotion, with a wide variety of products from the United States.

2) Coordination with U.S. trade associations

The ATO has been developing stronger relationships with U.S. cooperators in Japan. These associations generally work individually to market their products in the Japanese market. However, the coordination facilitated by the ATO for AEON's event provided a solid platform which enabled the cooperators to work together to bring about synergies and complement their individual activities in the Japanese market.

3) Assistance to AEON provided by ATO/FAS Japan

- **AEON's Sales Ceremony**

Mr. Geoffrey Wiggin, Agricultural Minister-Counselor from the U.S. Embassy, participated in the opening ceremony on May 30 at the Shinagawa store and gave a speech to celebrate the start of the promotion, which was greatly appreciated by the retailer.



- **AEONS's Flier**

The ATO negotiated with the California Governor's Office and obtained the permission to place the Governor's photo on the AEON's flier. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is a popular figure in Japan and his image on the flier helped to draw attention from the Japanese consumers to AEON's promotion. In addition, the ATO provided Mr. Wiggin's message and his photo on the flier and helped to promote U.S. products to the Japanese consumers.



Flier of the AEON's World Festa U.S.A

- **Coordinating the V5 Healthy Eating Cooking Demonstration**



During the AEON World Festa U.S.A. opening at their Shinagawa store, there was an ATO sponsored V5 Healthy Eating cooking demonstration. The cooking demonstration featured Chef Ema Koeda, a Culinary Institute of America trained chef who specializes in California cuisine. She developed healthy and delicious V5 original recipes that appeal to Japanese tastes while also promoting U.S. food ingredients. Among the featured dishes were beef cutlet with broccoli filling, quick and easy pork onion stew, and American cherry with lemon soda jelly. There were also cooking demonstrations at the other four flagship stores where V5 Healthy Eating recipes were featured.